

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A diagnostic system for a printing press operation, the diagnostic system comprising:

data storage means;

a generic database containing problem solving data stored on the data storage means;

a specialized database containing user-specific operations data stored on the data storage means;

an interactive data entry interface permitting a user to indicate print faults and access the databases; and

a processing unit for generating and displaying possible solutions to the print faults from the databases based on the print faults indicated by the user.

2. The diagnostic system of claim 1, wherein the interactive data entry interface includes inputs for submitting print jobs.

3. The diagnostic system of claim 2, wherein the processing unit includes precalculating capabilities for determining the appearance of the print jobs.

4. The diagnostic system of claim 1, wherein the interface permits a user to indicate print faults based on problem symptoms.

5. The diagnostic system of claim 1, wherein the interface permits a user to indicate print faults based on problem classification.

6. The diagnostic system of claim 1, wherein the interface permits a user to indicate print faults using an image-based approach.

7. The diagnostic system of claim 1, wherein the data related to the print fault is displayed in a hierarchy having a selected number of levels.

8. The diagnostic system of claim 1, further comprising customization inputs for adding links to multimedia files including diagrams, repair procedures, supplier recommendations, and contact information to any element of the hierarchy.

9. The diagnostic system of claim 1, wherein an image of the print fault is provided to the user.

10. The diagnostic system of claim 1, wherein the user interface can access data in the database based on a component or subcomponent of the printing press operation.

11. The diagnostic system of claim 1, further comprising a user input for adding cause and effect information to the database.

12. A system for diagnosing faults in a printing press operation, the system comprising:

- a user interface for inputting a problem description;

- a system level database containing generic knowledge regarding the printing press operation;

- a diagnostic interface for further specifying the problem; and

- a user level database containing specific knowledge regarding the printing press operation,

wherein the diagnostic interface includes inputs related to symptoms, classification, or visual matches.

13. A method of diagnosing faults in a printing press operation using an on-line interactive diagnostics system having a user interface and at least one database, the method comprising the steps of:

conducting a dynamic diagnostic session with the diagnostics system using the user interface;

choosing a solution from a list of potential solutions provided from the database based on the diagnostic session; and

updating the database with the chosen solution.

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